

What a great time to be a Philadelphia sports fan. Just a few months ago we enjoyed a magical Phillies postseason run to the World Series, and now, after a five-year hiatus, the Philadelphia Eagles are back in the Super Bowl! Who is excited for Sunday? I certainly am! And what do you know, The Eagles playing the Chiefs in Super Bowl 57 almost feels meant to be as it is seemingly predicted by this week's Torah portion Yitro. How so? There is a reference to both teams in the *parasha*! In Chapter 18, verse, 21, the Torah uses the phrase שְׂרֵי אֲלֵפִים, which can be translated as CHIEFS. In Chapter 19, verse 4, the Torah uses the word נוֹשְׂרִים, which means EAGLES. Does the Torah tell us which team will win? Not exactly. However, 19 is bigger than 18, so that of course must be a sign that the Eagles are going to win!

But in all seriousness, I have been thinking a lot this week not only about the Philadelphia Eagles, but also about the eagle reference in Yitro. Here is the full verse: **“Thus shall you say to the house of Israel: you have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to Me,”** (Exodus 19:4). What does this metaphor mean, especially considering the context of it coming just after the Exodus from Egypt? Perhaps the statement points to an important message about God's loving protection. To be carried on eagles wings indicates that God will care for and shield the Israelites; like a parent cares for a child. Even more, the Torah's use of eagles wings in this context indicates a remarkable, memorable, and special experience. An experience in which God's presence was felt, an experience in which human hearts and minds were uplifted, an experience that will never be forgotten.

To be carried on eagles wings, to soar higher and higher, seems to be a biblical indicator of a peak moment. We all experience peak moments; times that bring us tremendous happiness, satisfaction, and sense of accomplishment. Sports are often a key source of peak moments, but our greatest conduit for peak moments is Judaism. Through the mitzvot, observing Shabbat, giving tzedakah, and allowing Judaism to permeate our daily lives, we raise ourselves up and open ourselves up to the peak moments that surround us.

We hope to experience peak moments through our connection to God and also to another. And this leads to one more interpretation of the verse. The text states: “*v'esa etchem al canfei nesharim*- I lifted you up on eagles wings.” Not on a single eagle but on eagles wings. Yes, it seems that God is the eagle in this metaphor but perhaps, considering that it is in the plural, it can be all of us as well. We can help carry each other- our family, friends and loved ones through life. That is what God did for us

as He carried our ancestors from the peak moment of the Exodus to the peak moment of Sinai. So too, it is what we hope God will do for us today. But most of all, it is what we must do for each other. Peak moments are what they are because of the people that form them- the people that surround us, that carry us, and we them.

I hope that we all experience a peak moment on Sunday evening when green confetti is showering down on the field and the Eagles are crowned the 2023 Super Bowl Champions. However, that is only a small piece of the peak moment. The peak moment will be the memories that we carry with us, the hugs that we share with our family and friends, the high fives, the embracing of our children, the believing, the being together. Win or lose, it is those moments and those memories that we will, and that we must, carry with us.

And to get us all even more excited for the game, enjoy this rendition of the [Eagles Fight Song sung in Hebrew and English](#) by your TBS Clergy and Arnie Eisen, Chancellor Emeritus of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

FLY EAGLES FLY and Shabbat Shalom!